MORNING BRIEFING

9/13/89

'Topfree 10' trio won't be on TV

An episode of a new television game show that was to have featured three Rochester women from the "Topfree 10" has been canceled because the show's producers ran out of money.

Dave Garrison, a producer for *3rd Degree!*, said that although the show premiered Monday, the episode with the "topfree" women — one of the last to have been taped — was "put on hold" because the show's budget was exhausted.

The show is similar to the old *What's My Line?*, where celebrity contestants try to guess what groups of people have in common. Ramona Santorelli, Gail Niesner and Susan David of Rochester were to appear because all three were arrested in June for going shirtless on a Durand Eastman Park beach.

The show is broadcast Tuesdays through Fridays at 1 a.m. on WOKR-TV, Channel 13.

Topfree trio will be on game show

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who will try to guess the Rochester women's identities. Two other celebrities have yet to be chosen.

Santorelli said the producers have promised them time at the end of the show to explain their beliefs and why they were arrested.

"If we weren't able to do that, I probably wouldn't do it," she said.

Although a game show format often includes jokes and fun-poking, Santorelli said her goal is to combine the upbeat atmosphere with a message.

"The burden will be on us to get our message across — to keep it from being trivialized," she said.

Niesner said her only hesitation at first was a fear of being on national TV.

"I had to gulp down a bit of stage fright," she said, adding that she also was concerned about relatives watching the show who haven't heard about her activities.

The show will be taped Sunday, but the three are staying a few extra days to go sightseeing. All expenses are being paid by the show's producers.

"I think we'll hit a few dance clubs, and go to Hollywood," Niesner said. "We were planning to go on vacation anyway, so this is perfect."

The women can split a pot of up to $2,000, depending on how long they can hide their identity from the celebrities.

But the best part will be reaching a type of audience different from that which watches *Donahue*, Niesner said. "The bigger groundswell of support we can get, the better."

Equality for all

I AM writing to respond to Carol Wisner's letter of July 27, "Topfree: A non-issue." She says that she has never known a woman who has expressed a need or desire to be topless in public. I have a need — a need to be equal under the law.

And I have a desire, at age 64 — to be as relaxed and comfortable as I like, with my shirt off if I choose.

However, "need and desire" is only partly relevant, because the underlying issue is freedom and equality. Because this right has been denied us women for so very long, Wisner can say that the point is "what is considered appropriate in a particular culture."

Our particular culture as it relates to topfree rests on a law which hasn't changed for women, even though it has changed for men.

Is Wisner old enough to remember when men had to keep their tops covered? How did that law change? Some men tested it in 1936 — and were arrested for going topfree in public.

Now women want equality under the law. Does Wisner believe that biology is destiny, that simply because women develop breasts, they must be covered? No, it is the law that must change, and the culture will change accordingly.

It is Wisner's opinion that to work for equality between men and women on this issue is "ridiculous," and that this issue trivializes the more important goals women have to achieve. What is trivial about equality?

Equal protection under the law is the point — wherever and whenever it comes up. Maybe when we women have equal rights, including the right to be topfree, topless bars and other exploitation of women as sex objects will diminish.

The right to go topfree is, in essence, like any other legal right. The denial of any individual right is an instrument for the maintenance of inequality. And equality, like freedom, is indivisible.

Dvora Lederman Brighton

D+C S 12 '89

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Topfree trio to appear on TV game show

Women will use forum to present message of protest to national audience

By Laura Buterbaugh
Democrat and Chronicle

It's not exactly *Donahue*, but members of the Coalition for Topfree Equality figure a game show is just as good a way to tell the nation about their cause.

Rochester residents Ramona Santorelli, Gail Niesner and Susan David are flying to Los Angeles on Saturday to appear on the new game show *3rd Degree!*, scheduled to air this fall.

Similar to the old show *What's My Line?*, the new show features groups of people who have something in common. Celebrity contestants try to guess what that common factor is, and the mystery group wins money for each round they stump the celebrities.

"At first it sounded a little hokey. I thought they might not be taking us very seriously," Santorelli said yesterday. "But the producer was very sincere. I think it'll be fun."

The three are part of the group of 10 women arrested last month for going shirtless on a beach at Durand Eastman Park. And Santorelli is one of the original "Topfree Seven," who in 1986 made national headlines and an appearance on the *Donahue* TV talk show for their arrests at Cobbs Hill Park.

The group claims a state law, which prohibits women from exposing their breasts in public except for nursing babies, violates the 14th Amendment that calls for equal protection under the law.

A City Court judge dismissed the 1986 charges against the women. But now they face new charges of exposure of a person, a violation that carries a maximum penalty of 30 days in jail and a $500 fine. They are scheduled to appear in court Aug. 1.

Dave Garrison, a segment producer for *3rd Degree!*, said he heard of the Rochester women from a wire-service story that ran nationwide. "Right away we thought it would make a great show," he said.

The show will be hosted by Bert Convy, who owns the production company that created the show. The "Topfree" segment will run sometime in September. Garrison said Rochester's WOKR-TV, Channel 13, has purchased the show, but station officials couldn't confirm that yesterday.

Rue McClanahan from the TV show *Golden Girls* and Marsha Warfield from *Night Court* are two of the celebrities

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me after work to assist in such a
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Lori Baer Pittsford

Nothing wrong with Topfree

CAL THOMAS' column titled "Sex and violence OK on TV, but not Bible reading" led me to some irreverent parallels in our societal mores.

It is OK for our state government to sponsor gambling, often impoverishing families, but when a bookie does the same he is a criminal.

Another incongruity was brought out by Kathie Reilly of the Topfree Ten. It is OK for a woman to bare her breasts in a topless bar. But when she, like men, wants to go topless in a park or beach, it is called indecent exposure.

Beaches in the Caribbean, in Europe and Australia are now often topless. Nobody takes offense.

In our society a little tot is already trained to regard breasts as something indecent. No wonder when growing up they continue to make them an object for curiosity, to be hidden from sight.

Demystifying the female breast and pointing to its beautiful, God-given purpose, nourishing the little baby, can give young and old a much healthier outlook than we see today.

It is too often exploited for prurient reasons. I believe that this is the point the Topfree Ten want to bring out.

Walter Vanderbeek Palmyr

Give Robach the credit

WE appreciated Vince Taylor's well-r
searched article (July 13, *Democrat an*
Chronicle) about the problems human
service agencies have with state contracts, resulting in disruption of client services.

While mention was made of Roger Robach's sponsorship of the Prompt Contracting/Revolving Loan Fund bill now before the governor, yo
readers should k
just how impor
role Assembl
played.

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